

ISSN 0258 - 1744

# CHRISTIAN ORIENT

A JOURNAL OF EASTERN CHURCHES FOR CREATIVE THEOLOGICAL THINKING

MARCH 2015

VOL. XXXVI NO. 1



## ECCLESIOLOGY

OPENING THE DOORS:  
HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE OF VATICAN II  
Dr. Sebastian Chalakal

FOURTH CENTURY FIXATION OF EASTER DATE  
Prof. Dr. John Moolan

THE CHURCH: HARBOUR OF PEACE ON EARTH-  
A LITURGICO-THEOLOGICO EXPOSITION  
Sr. Dr. Tez Kunnathettu S.A.B.S.

NEWS

PROCESSED

MAY 28 2015

LIBRARY



# CHRISTIAN ORIENT

A JOURNAL OF EASTERN CHURCHES FOR CREATIVE THEOLOGICAL THINKING

MARCH 2015 VOL. XXXV1 NO. 1

## BOARD OF EDITORS

### Managing Editor

Dr. Thomas Mannoorampampil  
MA, S.T.D

### Executive Editor

Dr. James Thalachelloor D. C. L

## SECTION EDITORS

### ECCLESIOLOGY

Dr. James Puliurumpil Ph.D

### LITURGY

Dr. Pauly Maniyattu D.Sc.E.O

### SPIRITUALITY

Dr. Andrews Mekkattukunnel S.T.D

### ECUMENISM

Dr. Sebastian Vaniyapurackal D.C.L

### NEWS AND DOCUMENTATION

Dr. Dominic Vechoor S.T.D

### ANNUAL SUBSCRIPTION

INDIA, Rs. 80

ABROAD

\$30 or Euro 30 by Air mail

\$15 or Euro 17 by Sea mail

### SINGLE COPY

INDIA, Rs. 20/-

ABROAD

\$ 10 or the equivalent

## ECCLESIOLOGY

### Inside This Edition

#### OPENING THE DOORS:

#### HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE OF VATICAN II

Dr. Sebastian Chalakkal 03

#### FOURTH CENTURY FIXATION OF EASTER DATE

Prof. Dr. John Moolan 16

#### THE CHURCH: HARBOUR OF PEACE ON EARTH- A LITURGICO-THEOLOGICO EXPOSITION

Sr. Dr. Tez Kunnathettu S.A.B.S. 20

#### NEWS

37

Manuscripts and Book Reviews are to be sent to

The Executive Editor

**Christian Orient**

P.B.No.1, Vadavathoor, Kottayam 686010

Kerala, India

Tel: 0481 -2578319,2571809,2574594,2574596

Fax:91-481-2578525

E-mail: christianorientjnl@gmail.com

## Editorial

The treatise on the church appeared late in the history of Christian thought. It began towards the end of the middle ages and reached its culmination at Vatican Council II. In this development of ecclesiological thought we can distinguish three phases which are essentially interrelated: (i) the Fathers and theologians of middle ages, (ii) the formation of the treatise on the church, (iii) contemporary theological progress. Blessed cardinal Newman, who launched the Oxford movement, was of the opinion that the truth is with the Catholic Church as she is more close to the Fathers and the Councils. He thus emphasizes the importance of councils in the development of Catholic faith all throughout the centuries. The true faith, therefore, was handed over wholly and carefully from Nicea I till Vatican council II.

Vatican council II is the most significant event in this regard in the 20<sup>th</sup> century. That is the reason why St. John Paul II in the Apostolic letter *Novo Millennio Ineunte* (6 January 2001) recommended that the documents of the council need to be read correctly and thus to be known widely. The article '**Opening the doors: historical perspective of Vatican II**' by **Dr. Sebastian Chalakal** is a brief presentation of the history of Vatican council II. After presenting the historical context and the theological movements leading to the council, the different aspects of the very event of the council are discussed. The historical

context of the council is well exposed by the author. The different movements like Biblical, Liturgical and Ecumenical movements are well studied in this article. The convocation, the various commissions, the inauguration, the procedures and the different sessions are the further themes developed in this article. The unique features of this council given in the article adds to the beauty of this same.

Easter being the first annual feast in the church its celebration was very important in the early centuries of the church. East and west followed up separate traditions with regard to the date of Easter. Council of Nicea in 325 agreed upon a unified date of Easter. Thus the present calculation of Easter date as the Sunday after the full moon of March 21 is the fourth century development. The second article dealing with this theme titled '**Fourth century fixation of Easter date**' is by **Prof. Dr. John Moolan**. The author testifies to the fact that both in the East and the West the early celebration of the annual Pasch took place differently on different days due to different apostolic approaches to the date of death of Jesus as on Nissan 14 by the fourth Gospel (Jn. 19:31) and on Nissan 15 by the synoptic Gospels (Mt. 26:17, Mk. 14:12, Lk. 22:7). This paved the way for heated controversies between the East and the West during the second century before fixing a common date of Pasch (Easter) in the fourth century. The author gives first the

---



apostolic tradition in the East which stresses the death of Jesus as the Passover on 14<sup>th</sup> Nisan. But Rome, the West, follows the synoptic tradition of the death of Jesus as on 15<sup>th</sup> Nisan, the first day of the unleavened bread (Mt. 26:17). Romans stressed the theme of Resurrection and celebrated Easter on the Sunday following Nisan 15. It became a law later from the first Council of Nicea in the fourth century.

Church is the mystical body of Christ. It is the highlight of Vatican Council II. As Pope Paul VI said in the opening allocution at the second session of the council 'the church is a mystery'. It is a reality imbued with the hidden presence of God. It lies, therefore, within the very nature of the church to be

always open to new and greater exploration. **Sr. Dr. Tez** exposes this theme in '**The Church: Harbour of peace on earth – a liturgico theological exposition**'. According to Narsai, peace is the name of *Msiba*, who makes all to be at peace; for it is he that has made peace between the earthly and the heavenly beings (*An exposition of Mysteries*, Cambridge 1916, p.8). The Qurbana celebration is the commemoration of *Msiba*'s sacrifice for establishing this eternal peace. The author elucidates that the church becomes a harbour of peace on earth because she celebrates the mysteries of salvation. The church draws her life from it. It is a truth that doesn't simply express through a daily experience of faith, but recapitulates the heart of the mystery of the church.

**Dr. James Puliurumpil**

# OPENING THE DOORS: HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE OF VATICAN II

Dr. Sebastian Chalakkal

## 1. Introduction

The Second Vatican Council was the most significant event for the Catholic Church in the twentieth century. It was the twenty-first ecumenical council of the Church. Its impact in the history of the Church is shown by the fact that the theologians divide the century into the Pre-Vatican II and Post-Vatican II eras. In the words of St. Pope John Paul II, "the documents of the Second Vatican Council have lost nothing of their value or brilliance. They need to be read correctly, to be widely known and taken to heart as important and normative texts of the Magisterium, within the Church's Tradition ... I feel more than ever in duty bound to point to the Council as the great grace bestowed on the Church in the twentieth century."<sup>1</sup>

This article is a brief presentation of the history of the Second Vatican Council. After presenting the historical context and the theological movements leading to the Council, the different aspects of the very event of the Council are discussed.

## 2. The Historical Context of the Council

The general situation of society and the Church in the period before the Council was

characterized by evolution in various fields. This period marked the end of the colonialism and the emergence of rapid industrialization.

With the end of colonialism the peoples of Asia and Africa gained political independence. Decolonization took place in various stages in the different countries, sometimes with peaceful hand over of power and sometimes with a long and bloody struggle. Indonesia became independent in 1945, Philippines in 1946 and India in 1947. The move to self-rule was realized by Morocco and Sudan in 1956, Ghana in 1957, Kenya, Uganda and Madagascar in 1960.

Another factor in this period is the cold war between the Soviet Union and the United States of America. These superpowers were competing for power and influence in the world.

In the period before the council industrial field received a strong boost because of the new discoveries in scientific area and their rapid technological applications. Field of agriculture underwent radical changes in methods of cultivation, use of new fertilizers and new machineries. Through these, the life of the individual and of the society around the world underwent a radical change.

---

<sup>1</sup> Pope John Paul II, Apostolic Letter *Novo Millennio Ineunte* (6 January 2001), 57: AAS 93 (2001), 308.



The industrial undertakings and the power groups in the economic field led the people to consider individual utility as the criterion of life. What was basically sought was a policy that fulfilled the requirements of the contemporary moment. Altruism, social commitment and religious attitude were seen as elements that can only be applied on the personal level. The new possibilities of communication media promoted by television brought a new rhythm of life.

The above factors also influenced the family life. The traditional model of the family was eclipsed; the family has decreased in size and dialogue within the family has reduced. In these circumstances, many raised the question of whether the Church can speak of Christian values in the traditional manner. In the face of a rapidly changing world the Church had to present the Christian faith responding to the present situations.<sup>2</sup>

### 3. Theological Movements Leading to the Second Vatican Council

The outcome of the Second Vatican Council, as embodied in the sixteen documents, was the result of a number of theological movements that were taking place in the decades prior to the council. The following are the important ones.

#### 3.1. Catholic Tübingen School

A Catholic theological faculty was established in Tübingen University in

Germany in 1817. The distinguished teachers and scholars of the Catholic theological faculty are often called the "Catholic Tübingen School". The founding of the "Catholic Tübingen School" marks a turning point in the history of Catholic theology. The most important theologians of the Catholic Tübingen School of the nineteenth century are Johann Adam Möhler and Johann Sebastian Drey. Some of the most influential Protestant and Catholic theologians of the 20<sup>th</sup> century have been trained in the University of Tübingen. Among Tübingen's eminent students and/or professors include the theologians Karl Barth, Dietrich Bonhoeffer, Rudolf Bultmann, David Strauss, Paul Tillich, Martin Hengel, Albert Schweitzer, Romano Guardini, Walter Kasper, Hans Küng, and Joseph Ratzinger (Pope Benedict XVI). The Tübingen theologians made history a constitutive component of theological method. According to them, history reveals God's all inclusive purpose. History is God's eternal design manifesting itself in time. History moves toward the realisation of God's kingdom. Second Vatican Council would make this concept one of its important themes, particularly in presenting the Church as the pilgrim people of God.<sup>3</sup>

#### 3.2. Biblical Movement

By the end of the nineteenth century there was a movement in France, Belgium and Germany to return to the Bible. This

<sup>2</sup> G. Martina, "The Historical Context in which the Idea of a New Ecumenical Council was born" in R. Latourelle (ed.), *Vatican II: Assessment and Perspectives Twenty Five Years After* (1962-1987), Vol. 1, New York, Paulist Press, 1988, 3-13.

<sup>3</sup> M. Sullivan, *The Road to Vatican II: Key Changes in Theology*, New York, Paulist Press, 2007, 22.



biblical movement was scholarly in the sense that it used all the resources of archeology and philology for the better understanding of the biblical texts in their historical, intellectual and spiritual context. In the early part of the 20<sup>th</sup> century the Church was fighting against the heresy of Modernism and the historical-critical method in the interpretation of the Scripture had been criticized as being part of the Modernist movement. The Pontifical Biblical Commission, established in 1902, started to supervise the situation by pronouncing on biblical interpretation and authorship through a series of decrees during the period 1905-1915 which in effect placed boundaries to the Catholic scholars. However, the encyclical *Divino Afflante Spiritu* (1943) by Pope Pius XII created a renewed interest in scriptural studies. This encyclical embraced the historical-critical method to provide a more coherent understanding and interpretation of scriptural texts. In 1964 the Pontifical Biblical Commission issued the instruction, *Sancta Mater Ecclesia*, on the historicity of the gospels which fully embraced the historical-critical method. The teaching in this document was incorporated into *Dei Verbum* the following year.<sup>4</sup>

### 3.3. Liturgical Movement

The liturgical movement originated in Belgium because of the effort of the Benedictines. Slowly it spread to Germany, France and other parts of the Catholic world. This movement aimed at transcending the

rubricism and rigidity in liturgical life. The liturgical movement also made an effort to change passive believers into active participants by explaining the rites in the liturgy and by celebrating them in the language of the people. The movement also attempted to develop a theology of prayer. Louis Bouyer's *The Paschal Mystery* was an attempt in this direction.<sup>5</sup> Another theologian who played a great part in the liturgical renewal prior to the Second Vatican Council is Romano Guardini. In the period prior to the Second Vatican Council, the Eucharistic celebration resembled a performance from the part of the priest. The priest performed the celebration and the faithful observed it. Guardini insisted on the active participation of the faithful in the celebration of the Eucharist.<sup>6</sup> All the elements of the liturgical movement provided the impetus for the formulation of the Constitution on the Liturgy, *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, at Second Vatican Council.

### 3.4. Ecumenical Movement

The modern ecumenical movement entered into a new phase with the formation of the World Council of Churches (WCC) in 1948. It was formed by merging two earlier movements: the 'Faith and Order' movement, which focused on issues of doctrine that have divided the churches, and the 'Life and Work' movement, which promoted collaboration by the churches in social action. A third movement, International Missionary Council, joined the World Council

<sup>4</sup> G. Alberigo & J. A. Komonchak, *History of Vatican II, Vol. I, Announcing and Preparing Vatican Council II Toward a New Era in Catholicism*, Maryknoll, Orbis, 1995, 86.

of Churches at the assembly at New Delhi in 1961.<sup>7</sup>

The ecumenical movement in the twentieth century was largely without Catholic involvement. The change to a more positive evaluation of the ecumenical movement began in the 1950s. The Letter of the Holy Office *Ecclesia Sancta* on 20<sup>th</sup> December 1949 recognized that the ecumenical movement derives from the inspiration of the Holy Spirit and that it is a source of joy in the Lord for the Catholics. The letter also exhorted that the Catholics must take the ecumenical efforts of other Christians seriously in charity and prayer. The Holy Office allowed the Catholic experts to enter into discussions with other Christians on faith and morals.

Pope John XXIII established the Secretariat for Promoting Christian Unity on 5 June 1960, to help other Christians follow the work of the Council. The theology of the Church articulated at Vatican II provided the relationship of the Church with the other Christian traditions in more positive terms than had hitherto been the case. The Council was in favour of full participation of the Catholic Church in the search for Christian unity.<sup>8</sup>

### 3.5. New Theology

'New Theology' is the name commonly used to refer to a school of thought in Catholic theology that arose in the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century, most notably among French and German theologians. The theologians usually associated with 'New Theology' are Henri de Lubac, Teilhard de Chardin, Hans Urs von Balthasar, Yves Congar, Karl Rahner, Hans Kung, Edward Schillebeeckx, Marie-Dominique Chenu, Louis Bouyer, Jean Danielou and Joseph Ratzinger (Pope Emeritus Benedict XVI).

'New Theology' theologians advocated for a return of Catholic Theology to its original purity of thought and expression. To accomplish this, they demanded a "return to the sources" of the Christian faith namely, Scripture and the writings of the Church Fathers. Along with this, the movement adopted openness to dialogue with the contemporary world on issues of theology. They developed also a renewed interest in biblical exegesis and ecumenical dialogue. 'New Theology' theologians had a significant influence on the teachings of the Second Vatican Council.<sup>9</sup>

<sup>5</sup> G. Alberigo & J. A. Komonchak, *History of Vatican II, Vol. 1, Announcing and Preparing Vatican Council II Toward a new Era in Catholicism*, Maryknoll, Orbis, 1995, 86.

<sup>6</sup> M. Sullivan, *The Road to Vatican II*, 27-30.

<sup>7</sup> W. A. Visser't Hooft, "World Council of Churches" in *New Catholic Encyclopedia*, (Second Edition), Vol. XIV, Washington, Gale, 2003, 564.

<sup>8</sup> T. Stransky, "Ecumenism" in A. Hastings (ed.), *Modern Catholicism: Vatican II and After*, London, SPCK, 1991, 113.

<sup>9</sup> M. Sullivan, *The Road to Vatican II*, 17-18. Some of the ideas involved in the New Theology had been warned by Pope Pius XII in his encyclical *Humani Generis*.



#### 4. The Announcement of the Second Vatican Council

The papacy of Pope Pius XII had provided the Church with a strong, conservative leadership. After the death of Pope Pius XII in 1958, at the conclave to elect his successor, the cardinals had difficulty to come to an agreement, but finally elected seventy-seven year old Cardinal Angelo Giuseppe Roncalli, as the next Pope. The cardinals believed that the new Pope would serve as an interim, transitional Pope. But quite surprisingly, just three months after his election, Pope John XXIII announced his decision to convene an ecumenical council. His announcement provoked a wide range of responses. After the articulation of the papal infallibility at the First Vatican Council (1869-1870) no one thought there would ever be the need for another council.<sup>10</sup> Pope John XXIII himself has stated that the decision to hold the Second Vatican Council was because of a sudden inspiration.<sup>11</sup> In various discussions before the Council, Pope John often said that it was time to open the windows of the Church to let in some fresh air.<sup>12</sup>

Pope announced his intention of convoking an ecumenical council on January 25, 1959, the feast of the Conversion of St.

Paul, to the Cardinals in the Basilica of St. Paul Outside the Walls. In his address Pope clarified the three objectives of the council: to promote interior renewal among Catholics, to raise awareness among Christians of the reality of the Church and of the tasks she is charged with carrying out, and to call on bishops, with their priests and the laity, to assume responsibility for the salvation of all mankind.<sup>13</sup>

#### 5. The Preparation of the Council

Second Vatican Council was the best-prepared Council ever. The preparation of the council went through different phases.

##### 5.1. Antepreparatory Commission

Pope established an antepreparatory commission on the feast of Pentecost, May 17, 1959. This commission included mainly the representatives of the congregations of the Roman Curia. The president of the commission was Cardinal Dominico Tardini, the Secretary of State. The important task of the commission was to gather material for the work of the Council. The commission had to collect the suggestions of the bishops all over the world and the Roman congregations. The commission also had the duty of sketching a broad outline of the subjects to be discussed at the Council after

<sup>10</sup> M. Sullivan, *The Road to Vatican II*, 37.

<sup>11</sup> In the inaugural address of the Council, Pope said, "The decision to hold an ecumenical council came to Us in the first instance in a sudden flash of inspiration."

<sup>12</sup> M. Sullivan, *101 Questions and Answers on Vatican II*, New York, Paulist Press, 2002, 17.

<sup>13</sup> G. Alberigo & J. A. Komonchak, *History of Vatican II*, Vol. 1, 1-2. Pope announced three things: a Roman Synod, an Ecumenical Council and an update of the Code of Canon Law.



getting the opinions of the different faculties of theology and canon law. The commission also made some proposals for the membership in the various groups to be put in charge of proximate preparation of the Council.<sup>14</sup>

## 5.2. The Name of the Council

The decision to name the council as Vatican II was taken by the Pope on his own. Pope said: "I found that the ecumenical council now in preparation ought to be called 'the Second Vatican Council', because the last one, celebrated by Pope Pius IX in 1870, bore the name of Vatican Council I".<sup>15</sup> Pope communicated the name of the Council to Cardinal Tardini on July 14, 1959. Three days later Cardinal Tardini informed the heads of the ecclesiastical faculties that the council was to be known as Vatican II.

## 5.3. Preparatory Commissions

Pope appointed ten preparatory commissions on 5 June 1960, the feast of Pentecost By the *motu proprio Superno Dei nutu*. They were the theological commission, the commission for the bishops and the direction of dioceses; the commission for the discipline of the clergy and the Christian faithful; the commission for the religious; the commission for the discipline of the sacraments; the

commission for the sacred liturgy; the commission for studies and seminaries; the commission for missions; the commission for the apostolate of the laity; and the commission for the Oriental Churches. The pope also established a central commission to coordinate the work of the preparatory commissions. Pope was the head of the central commission. Three secretariats were also set up: one for economic and technical aspects (administration); one for the media of communication and one for the separated brethren to follow the work of the Council. The ten preparatory commissions were entrusted the task of studying the topics that might be treated at the Council. The central commission had the task of critical review of the texts prepared by the preparatory commissions and to determine whether the texts prepared were suitable to submit to the Pope. In seven sessions between June 12, 1961 and June 20, 1962, the central commission examined the preparatory commissions' proposed schemas and finally approved seventy three schemas.<sup>16</sup>

## 6. Formal Convocation of the Council

Pope formally convoked the council by the apostolic constitution *Humanae Salutis* on 25 December 1961. In this apostolic

<sup>14</sup> G. Alberigo & J. A. Komonchak, *History of Vatican II*, Vol. 1, 44-46.

<sup>15</sup> G. Alberigo & J. A. Komonchak, *History of Vatican II*, Vol. 1, 50.

<sup>16</sup> M. J. Walsh, "The History of the Council", in A. Hastings (ed.), *Modern Catholicism: Vatican II and After*, London, SPCK, 1991, 35; P. Pulikkan, *Indian Church at Vatican II, A Historico-Theological Study of the Indian Participation in the Second Vatican Council*, Trichur, Marymatha Publications, 2001, 133-134; R. F. Trisco, "Vatican Council II" in *New Catholic Encyclopedia*, Vol. XIV, (First Edition), New York, McGraw-Hill, 1967, 563.



constitution Pope declared that the Council will be held in St. Peter's Basilica in the year 1962.<sup>17</sup>

By the *motu proprio Approprinquante Concilio* (August 6, 1962) Pope laid down the rules that were to govern the conduct of the Council. In general sessions of the Council the proposed schemas will be subjected to discussion and voting. For the direction of the council sessions Pope established a board of ten presidents (all cardinals) who were to supervise the debate and maintain discipline. Pope also set up ten commissions which were the same as those in preparatory phase. Besides the chairman, appointed by the Pope, each commission consisted of 24 members, two-thirds of whom will be elected by the Council Fathers and the rest chosen by the Pope. Secrecy was to be kept by all attending the council with regard to the discussions held and the opinions expressed. Latin was to be used in the sessions of the Council and modern languages could be used in the meetings of the commissions. The speeches of individual fathers were not to last more than ten minutes. The majority required for approval of the matter discussed and debated consisted of two-thirds of those present and voting.<sup>18</sup>

## 7. The Inauguration of the Council

Pope John XXIII opened the Council on 11 October 1962 in a public session and read the declaration *Gaudet Mater Ecclesia* before the Council Fathers. Pope pointed out the important goals of the council: to safeguard and to expound with greater efficacy the sacred heritage of Christian truth, that doctrine embraces the whole man, body and soul. The council's goal is to eradicate the seeds of discord and promote peace and the unity of all humankind.<sup>19</sup>

## 8. The Participants of the Council

The participants of the Council include the Popes, Council Fathers, experts (*Periti*) and observes.

### 8.1. Popes

Vatican II spanned two papacies, firstly that of Pope John XXIII and then Pope Paul VI who succeeded him.

Pope John XXIII had a new style of life and interaction with the people as different from his predecessors. When elected as Pope in 1958 he said that his was a very humble office of shepherd and that he intended to pattern his ministry after that of Joseph in

<sup>17</sup> Pope said: "With the authority of our Lord Jesus Christ, of the holy Apostles Peter and Paul, and of our own, we institute, announce, and convoke for the forthcoming year 1962 the Ecumenical and Universal Council, which will be held in the Vatican Basilica, on days that will be established according to the opportunity which good Providence may deign to grant us."

<sup>18</sup> Later Pope Paul VI made some changes to these regulations. R. F. Trisco, "Vatican Council II" in *New Catholic Encyclopedia*, (First Edition), Vol. XIV, New York, McGraw-Hill, 1967, 563-564.

<sup>19</sup> R. F. Trisco, "Vatican Council II", 564.



the Old Testament who greeted the brothers with compassionate and forgiving words, "I am your brother, Joseph" (Gen 45:4). The Pope reminded the faithful that he was not a prince surrounded by the signs of outward power, but a priest, a father, a shepherd. He visited the sick in the Roman hospitals, the elderly in old age homes and the convicts at prison. He had his own vision about the Church and the authority in the Church.

One can not ignore the significant contribution of Pope Paul VI, who continued the council after Pope John's death. Pope Paul VI presided over the three sessions of the Council and tried to maintain unity in the Church after the Council. He tried his best to implement the spirit of the Council, advanced the cause of ecumenism and promoted the renewal in the Church.<sup>20</sup>

## 8.2. Council Fathers

"Council Fathers" was the term used for members who were entitled to vote and to speak in the debates, or to make written contributions in the Council. They were mainly of episcopal rank but also included superiors of major male religious orders (for example, Abbots). More than 2500 Fathers were involved in the Council, although not all would be present at any one time. Some of the important Council Fathers include Cardinal Alfredo Ottaviani, Cardinal Augustine Bea, Cardinal Josef Frings, Cardinal Leo Joseph

Suenens, Cardinal Franziskus König, Melchite Patriarch of Antioch Maximos IV Saygh, Cardinal Eugene Tisserant and Abbot Christopher Butler, president of the English Congregation of Benedictines.

## 8.3. Experts (*Periti*)

This group included theologians, canonists and other experts. Each Council Father was entitled to bring a theologian, or other appropriate expert of his choice. Some were invited by the Pope, or by Cardinals in the Roman Curia, and were given specific organizational duties. The experts worked according to the instructions given to them. They played an invaluable role in shaping the debates and the documents of the Council. The actual work of the different commissions was mainly in their hands. Some important experts include Henri de Lubac, Yves Congar, Karl Rahner, Hans Küng, Edward Schillebeeckx, Marie-Dominique Chenu, Jean Daniélou, Gregory Baum, Aloysius Grillmeier, Bernard Häring, Joseph Jungmann, Bernard Lonergan, John Courtney Murray, Michael Schmaus, Otto Semmelroth, George Tavard, Sebastian Tromp and Josef Ratzinger (Pope Emeritus Benedict XVI).<sup>21</sup>

## 8.4. Observers

A number of representatives of other Christian denominations were invited to the Council as observers. They were permitted

<sup>20</sup> R. Mc Brien, *Catholicism*, London, Geoffrey Chapman, 1994, 664-665.

<sup>21</sup> G. Alberigo & J. A. Komonchak, *History of Vatican II*, Vol. 1, 448. A list of experts is published in *L'osservatore Romano*, September 28, 1962. This list contains 224 names.



to attend the public sessions, but they did not have the right to vote or speak. They could make their views known to the commissions through the Secretariat for Promoting Christian Unity. More than three dozen representatives of other Christian communities were present at the opening session, and the number grew to 93 by the end of the fourth period of the Council.<sup>22</sup>

### 8.5. Indian Participants in the Council

During the time of the beginning of the Second Vatican Council there were 82 members in the Indian hierarchy. Of these 82, 70 members attended the first session of the Council. J. Putz, I. Extross, J. Chereath, C. Papali, P. Podippara were experts in the first session of the council. Fr. Paul Varghese, the assistant general secretary of the WCC, represented the Syrian Jacobite Church of India as an observer in the first session of the Council.

Out of the 82 members of the Indian hierarchy 77 participated in the second session of the council. Besides J. Putz, I. Extross, J. Chereath, C. Papali, P. Podippara, J. Neuner was also an expert in the second session of the Council. There were three non-catholic observers from India in the second session: K. Philipos, the vice-rector of the theological

seminary, Kottayam representing the Syrian Orthodox Church of India; C. P. Mathew, professor in the Union Christian College, Alwaye, representing the Marthoma Syrian Church; A. H. Legg, Moderator of the Synod of the Church of South India, Trivandrum representing the CSI Church.

Of the 89 members from the Indian hierarchy 75 participated in the third session of the council and 82 participated in the fourth session of the Council.

From the Syro-Malabar Church Mar Joseph Parekkattil (Ernakulam), Mar Mathew Kavukkatt (Changanachery), Mar George Alappatt (Trichur), Mar Thomas Tharayil (Kottayam), Mar Sebastian Vayalil (Palai), Mar Mathew Pothanamuzhy (Kothamangalam), Mar Sebastian Valloppilly (Thalassery); from the Syro-Malankara Church Benedict Mar Gregorios (Trivandrum), Zacharias Mar Athanasios (Thiruvalla). From the Latin Church in Kerala Dr. Joseph Attipetti (Varapoli), Dr. Aldo Maria Patroni (Calicut), Dr. Alexander Ezhedath (Kochi), Dr. Michael Arattukulam (Alappuzha), Dr. Jerome Fernandes (Kollam), Dr. Vincent Derera (Trivandrum), Dr. Bernard Perera (Auxiliary bishop of Trivandrum) and Dr. Ambros Absalow (Vijayapuram) attended the Council.<sup>23</sup>

<sup>22</sup> R. F. Trisco, "Vatican Council II", 563-564.

<sup>23</sup> P. Pulikkan, *Indian Church at Vatican II*, 203, 258-259, 345, 492-493; X. Koodapuzha, "Jalakangal Thuranna Vathican Council", *Sunday Deepika*, October 7, 2012, 1-2.

## 9. The Sessions of the Council

The Council was held in four sessions.

### 9.1. The First Session (11 October – 8 December 1962)

The first session of the Council was opened by Pope John XXIII on 11 October 1962. One of the important works of the Council in this session included the election of members of the ten conciliar commissions. Each commission would have sixteen members elected and nine appointed by the Pope, and were expected to do most of the work of the Council. Instead of proceeding immediately with the election of the members of the commissions, the council was adjourned to allow more time for consultations among the bishops of the various countries. The national and regional Episcopal conferences decided to recommend one or two candidates for each commission. In this way the commissions became more representative of the whole assembly of the Council Fathers. In the conciliar session from 20 October-17 December, debates on schemas on the liturgy, revelation, communication media, unity of Christians and the Church took place.

The proceedings of the council, however, were halted upon the death of Pope John XXIII on 3 June 1963. Cardinal Giovanni Battista Montini was elected as Pope on 21 June 1963 and he adopted the name Paul VI and he immediately announced that the Council would continue.

### 9.2. The Second Session (1963 September 29- December 4)

The second session of the council was started with Pope Paul's opening address on 29 September 1963. Pope stressed the pastoral nature of the council, and set out four purposes for it: to more fully define the nature of the Church and the role of the bishop; to renew the Church; to restore unity among all Christians, including seeking pardon for Catholic contributions to separation; and to start a dialogue with the contemporary world. During this period, the bishops approved the constitution on the liturgy (*Sacrosanctum Concilium*) and the decree on the media of social communication (*Inter Mirifica*). Work went forward with the schema on the Church, bishops, and ecumenism. The second session ended on 4 December, 1963.

### 9.3. The Third Session (1964 September 14-November 21)

A major event of the year 1964 was the meeting of Pope Paul VI with Patriarch Athenagoras, primate of the Orthodox churches. They made a joint expression of regret for many of the past actions that had led to the Great Schism between the western and Eastern Churches.

The third session of the Council began on 14 September 1964 and it was closed on November 21, 1964. During this period the Council Fathers worked through a large volume of proposals. There were debates on Mary, the bishops' functions, religious



freedom, Jews and non-Christians religions, revelation, lay apostolate, priests, Eastern Churches, Church and world, mission, religious, seminaries, education and marriage. Decrees on ecumenism (*Unitatis Redintegratio*), the Eastern Catholic Churches (*Orientalium Ecclesiarum*), and the Dogmatic Constitution on the Church (*Lumen Gentium*) were approved and promulgated by the Pope.

#### 9.4. The Fourth Session (1965 September 14-December 8)

The fourth session was opened by the Pope on 14 September 1965 with the establishment of the Synod of Bishops. The first work of the fourth session was the consideration of the decree on religious freedom, *Dignitatis Humanae*. The principal work of the rest of the period was work on three documents, pastoral constitution on the Church in the modern world, *Gaudium et Spes*, followed by decrees on missionary activity, *Ad Gentes* and the ministry and life of priests, *Presbyterorum Ordinis*.

The council also gave final approval to other documents that had been considered in earlier sessions. This included decrees on the pastoral office of bishops (*Christus Dominus*), the renewal of religious life (*Perfectae Caritatis*), the training of priests (*Optatam Totius*), declaration on Christian education (*Gravissimum Educationis*), and decree on the

apostolate of lay people (*Apostolicam Actuositatem*) and the dogmatic constitution on Divine Revelation.

The promulgation of declaration on religious liberty, decree on the missionary activity of the Church, decree on the priestly ministry and life and the pastoral constitution on the Church in the modern world also took place in this period.

On 8 December, 1965 the Council was formally concluded under Pope Paul VI, with the bishops professing their obedience to the Council's documents.<sup>24</sup>

### 10. Some Unique Features of the Council

Richard Mc Brien points out the following unique features of the Council.

1. The Second Vatican Council was unique in its purpose. The council was convened not for condemnations but for updating the Church for the sake of its own spiritual vitality, Christian unity and world peace.
2. By virtue of the number of the participants the Second Vatican Council was the greatest of all the councils held by the Church. The council had more than 2500 bishops from all over the world and the number of participants approached 3000, including the experts and the observers.<sup>25</sup>

<sup>24</sup> E. Schillebeeckx, *The Real Achievement of Vatican II*, New York, Herder and Herder, 1967, 91-99.

<sup>25</sup> R. F. Trisco, "Vatican Council II", 563.

3. Of those who took part in the council's opening session, four have become Popes: Cardinal Giovanni Battista Montini (Pope Paul VI); Bishop Albino Luciani (Pope John Paul I); Bishop Karol Wojty<sup>3a</sup> (Pope John Paul II); and Father Joseph Ratzinger (Pope Benedict XVI).
4. The Second Vatican Council was the most representative council in the history of the Church in terms of nations and cultures, with its bishops drawn from every major continent and culture. The previous council (Vatican I) with its 737 participants was dominated by Europeans, including European bishops of missionary lands. But most of the participants from the mission countries in the Second Vatican Council were themselves natives of those lands.
5. The Second Vatican Council was also more representative than earlier councils in terms of non-Catholic observers. Almost every major Christian Church was represented in the Council.
6. The Second Vatican Council was also more representative than earlier councils in terms of lay observers. 52 Lay observers were there in the second session of the Council, 29 of whom were men and 23 women, including 10 nuns.
7. The Second Vatican Council was the first ecumenical council to have available to it electric lights, telephones, typewriters and other modern means of communication,

and transportation. It was the first ecumenical council to be covered by newspapers and magazines as well as by radio and television.

8. The Second Vatican Council was also the greatest one in the number and the length of documents it produced when compared to the former ecumenical councils.<sup>26</sup>

## 11. The Documents of the Council

The documents of the council include 4 Constitutions, 9 Decrees and 3 Declarations. These documents vary in juridical standing and in content. The constitutions are more authoritative than decrees and declarations. Constitutions touch upon the doctrinal matters which pertain to the very essence or constitution of the Church. Decrees and declarations are directed at practical questions of specific pastoral concern. They presuppose the doctrine and the theology of the constitutions.

Two of the four Constitutions (*Lumen Gentium* and *Dei Verbum*) are called 'dogmatic' because they deal with matters which are part of the dogmatic content of Christian faith. One of the constitutions (*Gaudium et Spes*) is called 'pastoral' because it deals with the fundamental or constitutive relationship of the Church to the world. The constitution on the sacred liturgy has no special designation at all. Liturgy is part of the Church's constitutive nature. It is dogma in practice.<sup>27</sup>

<sup>26</sup> R. Mc Brien, *Catholicism*, 655-657.

<sup>27</sup> R. Mc Brien, *Catholicism*, 666-667.



## 12. The Implementation and Interpretation of the Council

To implement the work of the Council, Pope Paul VI formed a Papal Commission for the Media of Social Communication to assist bishops with the pastoral use of these media. Pope also declared a jubilee from 1 January to 26 May 1966 to urge all Catholics to study and accept the decisions of the Council and apply them for spiritual renewal. Pope changed the title of the Holy Office in 1965, giving it the name of the Sacred Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, as well as the titles and competences of other departments of the Roman curia. He made permanent the secretariates for the Promotion of Christian Unity, for Non-Christian Religions, and for Non-Believers.<sup>28</sup>

Pope John Paul II convened an extraordinary assembly of the Synod of Bishops in 1985, the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the close of the Council. This synod in its final report came up with six principles for sound interpretation of the Second Vatican Council.

1. The Council must be interpreted in continuity with the great tradition of the church, including earlier councils.
2. Each passage and document of the Council must be interpreted in the context

of all the other documents, so that the integral teaching of the Council may be rightly grasped.

3. The four constitutions of the Council are the hermeneutical key to the other documents.
4. The pastoral character of the documents ought not to be separated from, or set in opposition to, their doctrinal content.
5. No opposition may be made between the spirit and the letter of Vatican II.
6. Vatican II should be accepted as illuminating the problems of our own day.<sup>29</sup>

## 13. Conclusion

To mark the fiftieth anniversary of the beginning of Vatican II, Pope Emeritus Benedict XVI proclaimed the period from 11 October 2012 to 24 November 2013 a 'Year of Faith' in the declaration *Porta Fidei*. One of the objectives of the year of faith was to create a renewed interest in the teachings of the Second Vatican Council. As Pope Benedict XVI teaches, "If we interpret and implement it guided by a right hermeneutic, it can be and can become increasingly powerful for the ever necessary renewal of the Church."<sup>30</sup>

<sup>28</sup> R. F. Trisco, "Vatican Council II", 567-568.

<sup>29</sup> J. Tillard, 'Final Report of the Last Synod', *Concilium* (1986), 64-77.

<sup>30</sup> Pope Benedict XVI, Address to the Roman Curia (22 December 2005); AAS 98 (2006), 52; as cited in *Porta Fidei*, 5.

# FOURTH CENTURY FIXATION OF EASTER DATE

Prof. Dr. John Moolan

## Introduction

Both in the East and West the early celebration of the annual Pasch took place differently on different days due to different apostolic approaches to the date of death of Jesus as on Nissan 14 by the fourth Gospel (Jn 19:31) and on Nissan 15 by the Synoptic Gospels (Mt 26:17; Mk 14:12; Lk 22:7).<sup>1</sup> This paved the way for heated controversies between the East and West during the second century before fixing a common date of Pasch (Easter) in the fourth century.

## 1. Asia Minor and Syria

In the East, the communities in Asia Minor and Syria following the apostolic tradition of John (19:31) and Paul (1 Cor 5:7) stressed the death of Jesus as the Pasch (Passover) on 14<sup>th</sup> of Nissan, and celebrated the annual Pasch (Easter) together with the Jewish Passover Feast on Nisan 14. According to John (19:31), Christ died at the same hour when the paschal lambs were slaughtered in the Jerusalem Temple on the preparation day

(Friday). The death cry of Jesus was heard from the Mount Calvary exactly when the slaughtering-paschal lambs' cry in the afternoon from the temple was heard from the Mount Jerusalem on the other side of Calvary.<sup>2</sup>

According to Paul (1 Cor 5:7) Christ is our Pasch, since He has been sacrificed as our Paschal Lamb. Thus they claimed that the Pasch should be celebrated annually on the precise date of Jesus' historical Passover, Nissan 14, the first full moon of the Jewish year occurring in any day of the week. Hence they were known as *Quartodeciman* Christians; since they celebrated Pasch on *Quartodecima die* (fourteenth day).<sup>3</sup>

Two bishops of Asia Minor, Policarp of Smyrna (d.155/168) and Polycrates of Ephesus (d.200) supported *Quartodeciman* tradition as the correct one. Polycarp visited Pope Anicetus (155-156) and discussed about the situation of the matter. Polycrates in his letter to Pope Victor I (189-199) favoured

---

<sup>1</sup> A.A.McArthur, *The Evoluton of the Christian Year* (London, 1953) 82-87.

<sup>2</sup> *Mishna Pesachim* 5; R.de Vaux, *Ancient Israel: Its Life and Institutions* (New York – Toronto – London, 1961) 469.

<sup>3</sup> T.J.Talley, *The Origins of the Liturgical Year* (Collegeville 1991) 5-13.

---



the position saying, "We observe the exact day; neither adding, nor taking away. For in Asia great lights have fallen asleep, which shall rise again on the day of the Lord's coming, when he shall come with glory from heaven, and shall seek out all the saints."<sup>4</sup>

## 2. Rome

In Rome they followed the synoptic tradition of the death of Jesus on Nissan 15, the first day of the unleavened bread (Mt 26:17; Mk 14:12; Lk 22:7). Therefore they argued that the Jewish Pasch on Nissan 14 had nothing to do with Jesus' own Pasch (Passover) happened on the very next day of the Jewish Pasch. Hence they stressed the theme of Resurrection and celebrated Easter (Pasch) on the Sunday following Nisan 15. Pope Anicetus (155-166) supported this custom of annual Pasch on Sunday.

## 3. Controversy

The paschal controversy started with the attempt to unify the East and West in the computation of the annual Paschal (Easter) day.<sup>5</sup> In order to solve the problem, bishop Polycrates went Rome and discussed the matter with Pope Anicetus. Considering the Eastern and Western identity in this regard and respecting the principle of unity in diversity, the discussion ended up amicably retaining the *status quo*.

The problem became acute when Pope Victor I (189-199) decided upon the matter in favour of the Roman tradition, imposing the entire province of Asia to observe Pasch (Easter) on the Sunday following Nissan 14. Churches in the Asia Minor opposed Victor's decision. At this juncture, Irenaeus of Lyons (177-202), a companion of Victor, wrote intervening to urge him for a moderation in the decision.<sup>6</sup> As a result the problem was solved granting the former freedom to retain the status quo.

## 4. Unification

The Council of Nicea (325) discussed on the practical difficulties in following the Jewish tradition of Nissan 14 in Julian calendar for the observance of Pasch (Easter). In the West it was on March 25 and in the East (Asian version) on April 6/10. This caused the duplication of Easter date in different places. The Council did not succeed in finding out a satisfactory solution for this problem, but unanimously decided to entrust the matter with the bishop of Alexandria to calculate the correct date of Easter for every year and communicate it to different Churches, because the Alexandria being famous in the field of astrology was considered as eligible to deal with the problem of full moon calculation. Dionysius Exiguus, a monk and canonist, prepared a table of

<sup>4</sup> Eusebius, *Historia Ecclesiastica* V. 24. 2; P.Schaff, H.Wace (ed.), *Eusebius: Church History*, NPNF, series 2, vol. 1 (Grand Rapids – Michigan, 1952) 242, col. 1.

<sup>5</sup> Eusebius, *Historia Ecclesiastica* V. 23-25; P.Schaff, H.Wace, *Eusebius: Church History*, 241-244.

<sup>6</sup> Eusebius, *Historia Ecclesiastica* V. 24. 12-17; P.Schaff, H.Wace, *Eusebius: Church History*, 243-244..

Paschal (Easter) dates up to 626, which was universally approved and sent to different Churches.<sup>7</sup>

## 5. Calculation

The Easter date was calculated as on the Sunday following the first full moon after March 21. In order to avoid the Eastern stress on Nissan 14 and the Western stress on Sunday following Nissan 14 as the two Paschal (Easter) days, the Alexandrian calculation started with March 21, the sun's crossing of the equator with equal length of the day and night. Thus the sun, the greatest heavenly luminary, was also included in the calculation with that of the full moon with which most of the Jewish feasts were connected, since their first full moon of the year (Nissan 14) was their decisive Paschal day of liberation from the slavery of Egypt.

The Orientals satisfied as the Nissan 14 became the decisive element of fixing the Paschal (Easter) day, and the Occidentals satisfied as the Pasch was fixed on Sunday, the resurrection day. Thus respecting the Jewish practice and giving equal importance for the solar and lunar calendars to stress the intervention of great stars like sun and moon that govern the day and night in this respect, the Sunday was chosen for the annual Paschal (Easter) day without any difficulty.

## 6. Problem

When shall be the Easter day, If the full moon falls on the Sunday after March 21? Usually the following Sunday is the Easter day, but there are exceptions in this regard. In 1954 when the full moon was on Sunday April 18, the same Sunday was fixed for Easter, perhaps to avoid the very late occurrence of Easter as follows.<sup>8</sup>

Full Moon Sunday			Easter Sunday
28	March	1926	04 April 1926
13	April	1930	20 April 1930
02	April	1950	09 April 1950
18	April	1954	18 April 1954

The latest occurrence of Easter on April 25 is a rare happening. In the years 1666, 1734, 1886, and 1943 the Easter was on April 25, and this will happen again only in 2038, 2190, and 2258. Likewise the earliest occurrence of Easter is also a rare happening. In the years 1598, 1693, 1761, and 1818 the Easter was on March 22, and this will happen again only in 2285. So also in the years 1636, 1704, 1788, 1845, 1856, 1913, and 2008 the Easter was on March 23, and this will happen again only in 2160, 2228, and 2380.<sup>9</sup>

<sup>7</sup> M. Righetti, *Manuale di storia liturgica* II (Milan, 1955) 208-209.

<sup>8</sup> For this information I am indebted to Rev. Fr. Agapitus CMI of Trichur province, Kerala, letter dated 3 March 1991.

<sup>9</sup> V.J. Thottupuzha, "Nerathe Varunna Easter" *Malayala Manorama Daily News Paper: Supplement*, March 19 (2008) 19.



## 7. Future Possibility<sup>10</sup>

Though there are difficulties in fixing the precise chronology of Jesus, many scholars have indicated that April 7, 30 AD, the most probable date of death of Jesus, is the first Good Friday in history.<sup>11</sup> Hence the first probable Easter Sunday would be April 9, 30 AD. Since this date comes almost in the middle of Jewish Nissan month (March 25-April 25), the probable reform for a new fixed date of Easter could be drawn on the Sunday following the second Saturday of April in between 9-15 or otherwise the second Sunday of April in between 8-14.<sup>12</sup> But how far this could be ecumenically successful? Anyhow the Catholic Church in its appendix to the constitution on liturgy (sc) of Vatican II has declared that the Church is in favour of assigning a fixed Sunday for Easter in the Gregorian Calendar, provided the other Christian denominations agree with it; and

likewise favours also a perpetual calendar other than the Gregorian one, provided it should safeguard the seven-day week system including Sunday, so that the creation account may not be affected.

## Conclusion

Easter being the first annual feast in the Church, its celebration was very important. East and West followed up separate tradition with regard to the date of Easter. The fourth century council of Nice agreed upon a unified date of Easter. Thus the present calculation of Easter date as the Sunday after the full moon of March 21 is the fourth century development. Though there are possibility for a much easier calculation of this date based upon the dates of death and resurrection of Jesus, Vatican II has expressed the Catholic Church's readiness to a possible change in this regard if all other non catholic Churches agree upon it.

<sup>10</sup>A.Adam, *The Liturgical Year* (New York 1981) 60.

<sup>11</sup>J.Blinzer, *The Trial of Jesus*, trans. A.Adam & F.M. Hugh (Westminster, 1959).

<sup>12</sup>O.Heiming, "Gedanken zur Kalenderreform," *Liturgie und Mönchtum* 2.9 (1951) 37; L.Meesen, "Oecuménisme et réforme du calendrier," *La Maison-Dieu* 81 (1965) 120.

# **The Church: Harbour of Peace on Earth-**

## ***A Liturgico-Theologico Exposition***

**Sr. Dr. Tez Kunnathettu S.A.B.S.**

### **Introduction**

We know the Church is the mystical body of Christ. It is the highlight of the II Vatican Council. The very beginning of the Council's Document on the Church calls our attention to: "the mystery of the Church." The Council explicitly explains it in the next line. The term mystery indicates that the Church, as a divine reality inserted into history, cannot be fully captured by human thoughts or language.<sup>1</sup> As Pope Paul VI said in his opening allocution at the second session: "The Church is a mystery. It is a reality imbued with the hidden presence of God. It lies, therefore, within the very nature of the Church to be always open to new and grater exploration." By her relationship with M'siha, the Church is a kind of sacrament of intimate union with God, and of the unity of all kind. She is a sign and an instrument of such union and unity.<sup>2</sup> In this respect one of the main themes we discuss here is the *Church as the harbour of Peace on earth*. We take into consideration this theme with higher importance because this was one of the major issues of special urgency confronted in the II Vatican Council: that is

peace between peoples. The Supreme Pontiff John XXIII stressed that: "there is no one who does not hate war, and no one who does not strive for peace with burning desire. But the Church desires it most of all because she is the Mother of all. She never ceases to make an open declaration of her love for peace, her desire for peace."<sup>3</sup> It presents as the kernel of the Christian faith. It is a liturgico basis theme lies in the *Prayers Proper of the holy Qurbana for the Dedication of the Church*. We analyse in this study the Church as a harbour of peace on earth in relation to M'siha as the true paschal lamb who gave himself in sacrifice for us, and thus brought the peace to his bride, the Church. The Qurbana celebration contains this vital newness, which is offered to us again at every celebration. The Church enjoys and delights in this newness and springs to all. We see it in varied realms:

### **1. The Church: Place of God's self-communication**

The Church is the means of God's personal communication of himself as Word and the Holy Spirit. It is because God intends

---

<sup>1</sup> LG, 1.

<sup>2</sup> LG, 1§2.

<sup>3</sup> Opening Message of Pope John XXIII, on 11<sup>th</sup> September 1962.



to communicate himself into the null and void. He calls man into being to supply the nature in which His Word is to become incarnate and the history which is to be the milieu of His Spirit.<sup>4</sup> We get a clear picture about it from the Dismissal Service of the Qurbana of the Syro-Malabar Church. The *slosa* on Sundays and Feast days proclaims like this:

Lord, God Almighty, yours is the holy Catholic Church, the sheep of your flock, which was redeemed by the great passion of your Christ... in your mercy, O my Lord, you have rendered us, in spite of the littleness of your weak nature, worthy to become recognized members in the great body of the holy Catholic Church and to administer spiritual helps to the faithful.<sup>5</sup>

According to John Bar Zo'bi:

The prayer of the imposition of hands by the priest of the Church is the symbol of Our Lord's prayer for his disciples: Holy Father, keep them, then in your living Name that they be united with you in a perfect love, as I am, in you and you in me. You may Father and they are in me that they also may be gathered in me in the undivided unity.<sup>6</sup>

His is the reality which makes us sharers in the communal life of the triune God and

it leads us to an intersection with Him. In similar words all these prayers guide us to a soteriological dimension. It expresses the role of the Incarnate Word as cause of the sharing between the saving God and the participants of the Qurbana celebration. This soteriological understanding emphasizes our communal sharing in redemption through the life and death of M'siha our Lord and culminating in our resurrection.<sup>7</sup> As St. Paul expresses it: "God is faithful; by him you were called into the fellowship of his Son, Jesus Christ our Lord."<sup>8</sup> It makes us competent to share the divine life in the Church. Thus Church as an alternative stance gives at once a dependable priority to God's intention to communicate himself and a creative participation in his own being. God's self-communication would represent a new gratuitousness on his part to man. It is divine love of God now coming to us through the great celebration of the Church. It is fundamental to remember that, first and foremost, communion comes from God. It is a reward that is received not produced by man. Thus it is God's remarkable grace. Still, the very existence of God the Trinity is disclosed not only in creation but also in faith encounter with God acting within the Church, whose articulation into language appropriates God in the threefold symbol of Father, Son and Holy Spirit. In other words God is ineffable, declares that he is in his

<sup>4</sup> K. Rahner, "The Theology of the Symbol," *TI* Vol 4, 221-52. Here the word incarnate is the absolute symbol of God in the world, and the symbol strictly speaking is the self-realization of a being in the other, which is constitutive of its essence, 234.

<sup>5</sup> *TQ*, 31.

<sup>6</sup> T. Mannoorampampil (tr), John Bar Zo'bi, *Explanation of the Divine Mysteries*, Kottayam 1992, 32.

<sup>7</sup> M.A. Fahey, "Ecclesial Community as Communion," F.R. McMaus (ed), *The Jurist* Vol 36, 1976, 13; 4-23.

<sup>8</sup> 1Cor 1: 9.

dealings with men and that in M'siha he is gracious and saving God. Those who share in this grace of M'siha realize a new relationship uniting them with the triune God and encounter him wholly.

The primordial character of the mystery of the Church is unity<sup>9</sup>. The Church is one we proclaim in the Creed, because of her source: "the highest exemplar and source of this mystery is the unity in the Trinity of persons, of one God, the Father, and the Son and the Holy Spirit."<sup>10</sup> The Church is one because of her founder: "the Word made flesh, the prince of peace, reconciled all men to God by the cross..., restoring the unity of all in one people and one body."<sup>11</sup> It is the Holy Spirit, dwelling in those who believe and pervading and ruling over the entire Church, who brings about that wonderful communion of the faithful and joins them together so intimately in our Lord M'siha that he is the principle of the Church's unity.<sup>12</sup> Clement of Alexandria inspires us like this: "What an astonishing mystery! There is one Father of the universe, one Logos of the universe, and also one Holy Spirit, everywhere one and the same; there is also one virgin become mother, and I should like to call her "Church."<sup>13</sup>

In His Church He instituted the wonderful sacrament of the Qurbana by which the unity of the Church is both signified and brought about.<sup>14</sup> Unity is the essence of the Church and from that unity the peace permeates. Consequently the Church becomes the bearer of the divine sources.

### 1.1 The Church: Bearer of the Divine Sources

Our Lord M'siha the one mediator established and incessantly sustains here on earth his holy Church. It is the community of faith, hope and charity through which He communicates truth and grace to all men.<sup>15</sup> The Church is essentially both human and divine, visible and yet invisibly endowed, eager to act and yet devoted to contemplation, present in this world and yet not at home in it. She is all in such a way that in her the human is directed and subordinated to the divine.<sup>16</sup> As the First Vatican Council noted, the Church herself, with her marvellous propagation, eminent holiness, and inexhaustible fruitfulness in everything good, her catholic unity and invincible stability, is a great and perpetual motive of credibility and an irrefutable testimony of her divine mission.<sup>17</sup> Indeed, it is

<sup>9</sup> UR, 2§ 1.

<sup>10</sup> UR, 2 § 5.

<sup>11</sup> GS, 78§ 3.

<sup>12</sup> UR, 2§ 2. Cfr also: CCC, 813.

<sup>13</sup> Clement of Alexandria, *Paed.* 1, 6, 42; *PG*, 8, 300.

<sup>14</sup> UR, 2§ 1.

<sup>15</sup> Leo XIII, *Sapientiae Christianae*, 1890, AAS 22, 392. Cfr also: Leo XIII, *Satis Cognitum*, 1896, AAS 28, 710-24; Pius XII, *Mystici Corporis*, 1943, AAS 35, 199-200; *LG*, 8§ 1.

<sup>16</sup> SC, 2.

<sup>17</sup> Vatican Council I, *Dei Filius*, 3; DS 3013.



to the Church herself that the "Gift of God" has been entrusted... It is in her that communion with Christ has been deposited, that is to say: the Holy Spirit, the pledge of incorruptibility, the strengthening of our faith and the ladder of our ascent to God... For where the Church is there is God's Spirit; where God's Spirit is, there is the Church and every grace.<sup>18</sup> As we know the Church is in history, but at the same time she transcends it. It is only "with the eyes of faith" that one can see her visible reality and at the same time in her the spiritual reality as bearer of divine sources and life. "Oh humility! O sublimity! Both tabernacle of cedar and sanctuary of God; earthly dwelling and celestial place; house of clay and royal hall; body of death and temple of light; and at last both object of scorn to the proud and bride of Christ! She is black but beautiful, O daughters of Jerusalem, for even if the labour and pain of her long exile may have discoloured her, yet heaven's beauty has adorned her."<sup>19</sup>

It is in the Church that M'siha fulfils and reveals his own mystery as the purpose of God's own plan: to unite all things in him.<sup>20</sup> St. Paul calls the nuptial union of Christ and

the Church "a great mystery." Because she is united to Christ as to her bridegroom, she becomes a mystery in her turn.<sup>21</sup> As we know Christ loves the Church as his bride.<sup>22</sup> For her part the Church is subject to her head.<sup>23</sup> For in him dwells all the fullness of the Godhead bodily.<sup>24</sup> He fills the Church, which is his body and his fullness, with his divine gifts<sup>25</sup> so that she may grow and reach all the fullness of God.<sup>26</sup> Just as the assumed nature inseparably united to the divine word serves him as a living instrument of salvation, so in a similar way does the communal structure of the Church serve Christ's Spirit, who vivifies it by way of building up the body.<sup>27</sup> Contemplating this mystery in her, Paul exclaims: "Christ in you, the hope of glory."<sup>28</sup> The Church's first purpose is to be the sacrament of the inner union of men with God. Because men's communion with one another is rooted in that union with God, the Church is also the sacrament of unity of the human race. In her, this unity is already begun, since she gathers men "from every nation, from all tribes and peoples and tongues."<sup>29</sup> At the same time, the Church is the "sign and instrument"<sup>30</sup> of the full realization of the

<sup>18</sup> Ireneus, *Adv.haeres.* 3, 24,1; *PG*, 7/1, 966.

<sup>19</sup> Bernard of Clairvaux, In *Cant. Sermo* 27: 14: *PL*, 183: 920D.

<sup>20</sup> Eph 1: 10.

<sup>21</sup> Eph 5: 32.

<sup>22</sup> Eph 5: 25-28.

<sup>23</sup> Eph 5: 22-23.

<sup>24</sup> Col 2: 9.

<sup>25</sup> Eph 1: 22-23.

<sup>26</sup> Eph 3: 19.

<sup>27</sup> Eph 4: 16. Cfr also: Leo XIII, *Satis Cognitum*..., 713.

<sup>28</sup> 1Cor 11: 8.

<sup>29</sup> Rev 7: 9.

<sup>30</sup> *LG*, 1.

unity yet to come. It is in this unity we are incorporated into his divine life. The second part of the rite of reconciliation of the Qurbana of the Syro-Malabar Church, the deacon reminds us of the great fact that the Church is the perfect fountain of M'siha's divine life. This *karoꝣuꝣa* is the re-capitulation of M'siha's whole work, which He has wrought in history. The deacon proclaims:

With reverence and respect let us all approach the mysteries of the precious Body and Blood of our Saviour. In the purity of our hearts and in the true faith let us recall to our minds His passion and consider His resurrection. For our sake did the only begotten of God receive from us men a mortal body with a rational and spiritual soul endowed with immortality. By His life-giving laws and by his holy precepts He led us from error into the knowledge of truth. Having accomplished the dispensation of redemption for us, he the first fruit of our nature experienced the cross and rose from the dead, and ascended into heaven; He delivered to us His Holy Mysteries by which we all remember His mercy towards us.<sup>31</sup>

Here we note that God's plan, which forms the enduring element of the Church, is to have men partake in His own divine life in M'siha. We have to make out this plan as springing from pure and enormously

gratuitous love.<sup>32</sup> Therefore in the last part of the same *karoꝣuꝣa* the herald of the Church announces:

Let us therefore, with overwhelming love and a humble heart, receive the gift of Eternal life, and through pure prayer and deep contrition participate in the mysteries of the Church. In the hope of penance, turning from our iniquities, and grieving for our sins, let us ask mercy and forgiveness from God, the lord of all, while forgiving our brethren their faults.<sup>33</sup>

This opening of the Trinity to embrace humanity constitutes the very essence of the Church's mystery. Gathered together as many in M'siha, we enter into communion with the Father, Son and the Holy Spirit.

Further through the *Onisa d' Bathe* the herald's proclamation is a reaffirmation of the Church as the perfect fountain of divine sources because she provides the Body and Blood of our Lord M'siha. It is the source by which the Church exists as the fountain for us. Inviting us the deacon announces: "My brethren, the Church invites you: "Receive the body of the Son and drink from His chalice with faith in the kingdom of heaven."<sup>34</sup>

From all these, we have hitherto said, the Church is the bearer of all divine things. It is possible only through the communication of the Holy Spirit. He is the channel through

<sup>31</sup> TQ, 56.

<sup>32</sup> R.Hasseveldt, *The Church, A Divine Mystery*, Indiana 1954, 54.

<sup>33</sup> TQ, 57.

<sup>34</sup> TQ, 63.



which all the gifts, powers, and extraordinary graces found superabundantly in the head as in their source flow into all the members of the Church, and are perfected daily in them according to the place they hold in in the Mystical Body of M'siha.<sup>35</sup> The Church acts as Church only when she acts as the instrument of the glorified Lord. The whole Church can and ought to say with St. Paul: "And the life I know live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God."<sup>36</sup> The Church becomes the sign of God's presence in the world. "For the reason of the Eucharistic Sacrifice, this community is ceaselessly on the way with Christ to the Father."<sup>37</sup> Finally she walks in love, and glows with an apostolic spirit.<sup>38</sup> She is sign, which points out M'siha to others.<sup>39</sup> Moreover she is a perfect sign of M'siha among men.<sup>40</sup> So "it is the function of the Church, led by the Holy Spirit who renews and purifies her ceaselessly, to make God the Father and His Incarnate Son present and in a sense visible."<sup>41</sup> She is his fulfilment and fullness.<sup>42</sup> She is the tabernacle of his presence,<sup>43</sup> the building of which he is both

the architect and the cornerstone. She is the temple in which he teaches, and into which he draws with him the whole divinity. She is the star and he the light that illuminates our night.<sup>44</sup> The celebration of the Qurbana is thus at the centre of the process of the Church's growth. The Church exists and acts through the word and sacrament especially through the holy Qurbana. In other words the Church and the celebration of the Qurbana are inevitably united.<sup>45</sup> The Church draws her "living water"<sup>46</sup> from the unique channel, viz., the Holy Qurbana. All the expressions of the Church are thus summed up in the Qurbana celebration.

### 1.1.1 The Church: Harbour of Peace on earth

We know the Church is the mystical body of M'siha. According to Narsai peace is the name of M'siha, who makes all to be at peace. For it is he that has made peace between earthly and heavenly beings.<sup>47</sup> The Qurbana celebration is the commemoration of M'siha's sacrifice for establishing this eternal peace. In

<sup>35</sup> Pius XII, *Mystici Corporis*, no. 77.

<sup>36</sup> Gal 2: 20.

<sup>37</sup> AG, 15§ 2.

<sup>38</sup> AG, 15§ 2.

<sup>39</sup> AG, 20§ 1.

<sup>40</sup> AG, 21§ 1.

<sup>41</sup> AG, 21§ 1. Cfr also: LG, 7§5; LG, 48§ 2; SC, 35§3; B. Kloppenburgh, *The Ecclesiology of Vatican II*, Chicago 1974, 39.

<sup>42</sup> Eph 1: 23.

<sup>43</sup> Ex 25: 8; PL, 17, 88: 46,c, 937b.

<sup>44</sup> Origen, *First Homilies on Genesis* no. 5.

<sup>45</sup> H. De Lubac, *The Motherhood of the Church: Followed by Particular Churches in the Universal Church, and an Interview conducted by Gwendoline Jarczyk*, San Francisco 1971, 59, PL, 33: 1077.

<sup>46</sup> Jn 7: 38.

<sup>47</sup> Narsai, 'An exposition of the Mysteries,' (A), *Texts and Studies contributed to Biblical and Patristic Literature*, Cambridge 1916

the celebration of the Qurbana according to Narsai: "the priest blesses the people in that hour with that saying which the life giving mouth prescribed: 'Peace be with you,' says the priest to the children of the Church, for peace is multiplied in Jesus our Lord who is our peace. ..., 'Peace be with you,' for you have been made at peace with the angels by Him who has authority over the angels and reigns over all..., 'Peace be with you,' because you have been summoned to the Kingdom aloft by Him who entered first to prepare a place for us."<sup>48</sup> Then the herald of the Church commands all the people to give the Peace, in the love of our Lord. First the priests give the Peace in the midst of the sanctuary; and the people also give it in the nave in the same manner. It behoves him that gives the Peace to his brother in the Church to wash his heart from all hatred and anger and lust. This is the peace in which there is no treachery and no hatred; but it is all light in light and perfect love. Blessed is he that makes his heart peaceful at the hour of the Mysteries, for all his debts and hateful deeds shall be forgiven him.<sup>49</sup> Then the deacon admonishes in this hour,"

pray in your minds; peace be with us;<sup>50</sup> "great peace is being accomplished with the accomplishing of the mysteries."<sup>51</sup> All these facts remind us of our Lord's resurrection from the dead. Peace is the sum and substance of M'siha's resurrection.<sup>52</sup> The Church thus becomes a harbour of peace on earth because she celebrates these mysteries of resurrection. She is the harbour of peace on earth when she has her basis and centre in the celebration of the most holy mysteries. We the branches from the olive tree have been grafted on to the true Olive Tree and we partake of its root and sap.<sup>53</sup> That is the life of the incarnate Word passes into us and produces fruit in us.<sup>54</sup> We are branches and will bear fruits only as long as we are vitally linked to the vine.<sup>55</sup> This vital union with M'siha is the fundamentality for the Church as the harbour of peace on earth because it is his body. The *Onisa d' Qanke*<sup>56</sup> on the First Sunday of the Dedication of the Church exclaims:

O Christ, you have founded for your worshippers and harbour of peace on earth similar to heavenly dwelling place.  
O glorious King, while you seated at

<sup>48</sup> Narsai, 'An exposition of the...', 8.

<sup>49</sup> Narsai, 'An exposition of the...', 9.

<sup>50</sup> TQ, 48.

<sup>51</sup> Narsai, 'An exposition of the...', 18.

<sup>52</sup> Narsai, 'An exposition of the...', 26.

<sup>53</sup> Rom 11: 16-22.

<sup>54</sup> B. Kloppenburgh, *The Ecclesiology of Vatican II*, 1974, 39.

<sup>55</sup> Jn 15: 1-15.

<sup>56</sup> Gabriel Qatraya Bar Lipha, "Interpretation of Offices," G. Vavanikkunnel (tr), *Homilies and Interpretations on the Holy Qurbana*, Theodore of Mopsuestia, Narsai and Gabriel Qatraya, Changanacherry 1977, 90. *Onisa d' Qanke* is the mystery of the praises of the heavenly congregation which offered new praises to the Lord of all, or it is the mystery of the praises John was offering up saying: "this is the lamb of God that takes away the sins of the world."



the right hand of the Father you have filled your Church with the splendour and beauty of your cross. And so angels and men rejoice in her and sing praises at her dedication; the Father laid her foundation, the Son built and completed her, and the Holy Spirit descending sanctified her. We pray to you: Be you a strong fortress of the Church and grant her lasting peace.<sup>57</sup>

As it is mentioned here, after the prayer of Deposition, the celebrant making a profound bow, says in a low voice: Lord "With our hearts, washed clean from evil thoughts may we be made worthy to enter the holy of holies and to stand before your altar in purity, devotion, diligence and holiness and offer you spiritual and rational sacrifices in true faith."<sup>58</sup> It envisages the needed disposition of our minds to enter into the Church's altar, for the Church is the Body of the glorified Lord and the temple of the Holy Spirit continuing through the centuries the mission of the Incarnate Son. This is the principal reason why we love and should love the Church. Pope Pius XII, in his Encyclical on the Mystical body says:

In order that such a solid and undivided love may abide and increase in our souls day by day, we must accustom ourselves to see Christ Himself in the Church. For it is Christ who lives in His Church, and through her teaches, governs and sanctifies; it is also Christ who manifests Himself differently in different

members of His society.<sup>59</sup> This is the primary and fundamentally important fact, which ought to shape our consciousness concerning the Church. Since M'siha is the living sacrament—the plenary gift of God, his door to enter us, his organ to speak to us, his throne to rule us, his heart to love us, receive us, enlighten us, console us, and sanctify us—<sup>60</sup> the Church is the living sanctuary and a harbour of peace and his Body itself. Because Christ himself is the great SACRAMENT, the supremely efficacious Sign of God's benevolence, the Word of life, the Word of God rendered sensible and palpable (cf. John 1: 1.)<sup>61</sup> Thus the Church holds the pearl of great price in her hand because she is born in and through the body and blood of M'siha. The same thing we sing in the *Onisa d' Raze* on the First Sunday of the Dedication of the Church:

Let mount Zion be glad, let the daughters of Judah rejoice (Ps 48: 1). Sing and rejoice, O faithful Church, daughter of the King of ages, because of the Spouse who has accepted you as his Bride and led you into his bridal chamber; he gave as dowry his own body and precious blood; he has purified and sanctified you by his sacrifice.<sup>62</sup>

It explains to us again one another truth that the participation in the body and blood of M'siha unites us to him. Thus the Church serves us to as a harbour of peace on earth because "what was visible in Christ has now

<sup>57</sup> PPHQ Vol 4, 414-16.

<sup>58</sup> TQ, 38.

<sup>59</sup> Pope Pius XII, *Mystici Corporis*, no. 93.

<sup>60</sup> E. Mura, *The nature of the Mystical Body*, London 1963, 106.

<sup>61</sup> E. Mura, *The nature of the...*, 106.

<sup>62</sup> PPHQ Vol 4, 418.

passed over into the sacraments of the Church”<sup>63</sup> especially through the celebration of the Holy Qurbana. It is actually an exact place to meet our Lord M’siha.

### 1.1.2 The Church: Oneness and Communion par excellence

We know the Church is the living body of M’siha. This body is what it is through the incarnation of M’siha.<sup>64</sup> We celebrate its culmination in the holy Qurbana. It is actually the locus of uniting us with M’siha’s own oneness and communion. Another point which will enlighten us more into this realm is the Holy Communion. “Incorporation into Christ, which is brought about by Baptism, is constantly renewed and consolidated by sharing in the Eucharistic Sacrifice, especially by that full sharing which takes place in sacramental communion.”<sup>65</sup> He enters into friendship with us: “You are my friends.”<sup>66</sup> Undeniably it is because of Him we have life: “Those who eat my flesh and drink my blood abide in me, and I in them.”<sup>67</sup> The communion brings about in a magnificent way the mutual in-existence of M’siha and each of the participants of the Qurbana. From the perpetuation of the sacrifice of the cross and the Church’s communion with the body and

blood of M’siha in the Qurbana, the Church draws the spiritual power needed to carry out her mission.<sup>68</sup> The Qurbana thus appears as both the source and summit of all her activities, since its goal is the communion of mankind with M’siha and in him with the Father and the Holy Spirit. It is then in the Qurbana as well as in the Church that we have communion in the mystery of M’siha. And this communion makes us members of his body to a deep experience of him.

The other sacraments, as well as every ministry of the Church and every work of the apostolate, are linked with the holy Eucharist and are directed toward it. For the most blessed Eucharist contains the Church’s entire spiritual wealth, that is, Christ himself, our Passover and living bread. Through His very flesh, made vital and vitalizing by the Holy Spirit, he offers life to men. They are and thereby invited and led to offer themselves their labours, and all created things together with him.<sup>69</sup>

Thus the communion in the body and blood of M’siha authenticates that the Church lives through His living body. The formula for communion itself is the evidence for this. While giving communion the celebrant says:

<sup>63</sup> Leo the Great, *Quod conspicuum erant in Christo transivit in Ecclesiae sacramenta*,” Sermo LXXIV: 2, *PL*, 54, 398

<sup>64</sup> T.F.Torrence, *The Trinitarian Faith*, Edinburgh 1988, 254.

<sup>65</sup> *EE*, 22§ 1.

<sup>66</sup> Jn 15: 14.

<sup>67</sup> Jn 6: 56.

<sup>68</sup> *EE*, 22§ 2.

<sup>69</sup> *PO*, 5§ 2, Cfr also: T.Aquinatis, *Summa Theologiae Tertia Pars et Supplementum*, Italy 1956, q.73, a.3.c; q 65, a.3.



“The Body and Blood of our lord Jesus Christ be unto the remission of sins and life everlasting.”<sup>70</sup> The Church is fortified by the Holy Spirit through the sanctification of the faithful in the Qurbana.<sup>71</sup> The personalizing integrating activity of the Holy Spirit creates, not only reciprocity between M’siha and us, but also a community of reciprocity among us. The Holy Spirit rooted in and reflects the Trinitarian relations in us through the Church.<sup>72</sup> The assembly gathered for the celebration of the Qurbana is an assembly of faith, shared by all and professed by all. The recitation of the Creed is the most obvious expression of this. But the assembly is also a community of love, a sign of unity and a bond of charity, a paschal banquet in which Christ is consumed, the mind is filled with grace, and a pledge of future glory is given to us.<sup>73</sup> The celebration of the Qurbana is necessary for our salvation. According to St. Thomas Aquinas: “The reality of the sacrament (the *res sacramenti*) is the unity of the Mystical Body, without which there can be no salvation; for there is no entering into salvation outside the Church, just as in the time of the deluge there was none outside the Ark, which denotes the Church... 1Pet 3: 20-21.”<sup>74</sup>

This remarkable text gives us an understanding of the mystery of the Church,

which exists entirely as a function of the Qurbana, and through the Qurbana.<sup>75</sup> From this we legitimately conclude that the identity of the Church is dynamic and virtual, in as much as the sacrament of the altar nourishes and increases the life of the Church and strengthens the unity of the Mystical Body. There is no union with M’siha independent of his Mystical Body. The Dogmatic Constitution on the Church repeatedly uses the concept of the Church as the sacrament of salvation. It explains: “By her relationship with Christ, the Church is a kind of sacrament of intimate union with God, and of the unity of all mankind, that is she is a sign and an instrument of such union and unity.”<sup>76</sup> Thus the Council affirms, “through Christ the mediator, we should be drawn day by day into ever closer union with God and with each other, so that finally God may be all in all.”<sup>77</sup> It is our conviction that the Church celebrates the Qurbana to experience her Lord M’siha in a full and deeper level.

### 1.1.2.1 The Church: Creator of a new relationship with God

The Church is the true source of creating new and eternal relationship with her head M’siha. She achieves this through the celebration of the sacraments particularly

<sup>70</sup> TQ, 64.

<sup>71</sup> F. Graffin, « Lord’ Eucharistie chez saint Ephrem, » *Pde Lord’ O* Vol 4, 1973, 93-21. Cfr also: Y. Congar, *This Church that I Love*, New Jersey 1969, 39ff.

<sup>72</sup> T.F. Torrence, *The Trinitarian...*, 254.

<sup>73</sup> SC, 47. Cfr: St. Augustine, “In Ioannis Evangelium tractatus 26,” c.6, n.13: *PL*, 35, 1613.

<sup>74</sup> T. Aquinas, *Summa III a*, q.73, a.3.

<sup>75</sup> E. Mura, *The nature of the...*, 115-19.

<sup>76</sup> LG, 1§ 2. Here the Council quoted St. Cyprian, “inseparabile unitatis sacramentum,” St. Cyprian, Ep 69; *PL*, 3, 1142B

through the Qurbana celebration. In and through the celebration of the Qurbana, she “constantly lives and grows”<sup>78</sup> and expresses her very nature. The Qurbana thus appears as the culmination of all the sacraments in perfecting our communion with God the Father by identification with his only begotten Son through the working of the Holy Spirit.<sup>79</sup> Unlike any other sacrament, in the Qurbana celebration the Church builds up a new relationship with M’siha and brings us to the heights of every good thing. Here is the ultimate goal of every human desire, because here we attain God and God joins himself to us in the most perfect union. It is in his Church that God looks upon us and loves us, in her that he longs for us and we encounter him, and in her that we unite to him and are made blessed.<sup>80</sup> It is the place chosen by God for the invocation of his name.<sup>81</sup> It is the

temple in which we worship the Trinity.<sup>82</sup> Again she is the dwelling place prepared on the mountain tops and foretold by the prophets, to which, one day, all nations are to come to live in unity under the law of the one God.<sup>83</sup> She is the treasure chamber in which the apostles have laid up the truth, which is M’siha.<sup>84</sup> She is the only one and the haven in which the Father celebrates the wedding of his Son, since it is in her that we receive our forgiveness. It is through her that we are welcomed to life and the gifts of the Holy Spirit.<sup>85</sup> Strictly speaking, however, if we take the Church in the fullness of her reality, it is she, who believes<sup>86</sup> and confesses the holy Trinity,<sup>87</sup> as it is also she who hopes, loves and whom he feeds daily with sacraments especially through the celebration of the Qurbana. This reminds us of M’siha’s mystery in God’s revelation in the saving action of his

<sup>77</sup> SC, 48, Cfr: St. Cyril of Alexandria, “Commentary of the gospel of John,” Book 11, c.11-12: PG, 74, 557-64.

<sup>78</sup> LG, 26.

<sup>79</sup> EE, 34.

<sup>80</sup> Jn 10: 30; Eph 1: 22-23; cfr: S. McKenna (tr), St. Augustine, *The Trinity*, Bk 4, Church 9, *The Fathers of the Church: A New Translation* Vol 45, Washington 1963, 146, PL, 167, 957 b, H. De. Luback, *The Splendour of the Church*, New York 1956, 24-25.

<sup>81</sup> Rupert of Deutz, *In Deuter.*, Pt I, Bk 2, Church 1; PL, 167, 957 B.

<sup>82</sup> H. De. Luback, *The Splendour of the...*, 20.

<sup>83</sup> Is 2: 2-3.

<sup>84</sup> Irenaeus, *Adversus Heresum*, Bk 3, Church 4, no. 1. Cfr: W. A. Jurgens (tr), *The Faith of the Early Fathers: A Source Book of Theological and Historical passages from the Christian writings of the Pre-Nicene and Nicene eras*, Vol 1, Bangalore 1984, 90-91.

<sup>85</sup> Cyprian, *Epi* 69, no. 2 and *Epi* 70, no. 2. Cfr: ANF Vol 5, Michigan 1965, 376-77.

<sup>86</sup> Ambrose, *De Mysteriis*, 7, 35-41 and 9, 55. Cfr: NPNF Vol 10, Michigan 1955, 321-22.

<sup>87</sup> Epiphanius of Salamis, *Expositio Fidei*, Church 14. Cfr: PG 42, 808-09.



incarnate Son and redemption and healing of the Church. It continues after the glorified God- man has returned to his Father, until the full number of the Church's members is complete. The mystery of M'siha is carried on and made actual in the mystery of the worship of the Church.<sup>88</sup> It is the Lord himself who acts this mystery. God's ultimate purpose is to unite all men with his own being. Thus the Church grows in the being of God so that in her, man may mirror forth God. It is an event of faithful divine-human encounter. For all these reason the Church creates and serves a relationship with our Lord.

### 1.1.2.2 The Church: Mystery of Saving Worship

The essence of the Church consists in the celebration of the Qurbana. We see the Church fully in this celebration. It is in the Qurbana celebration that the whole Church achieves the final goal of grace achieved by M'siha. The Church is thus the visible expression of M'siha's redemption and grace realized in this saving worship-the Qurbana.<sup>89</sup> The Qurbana is the sacrament by which the Church is now united. It is the effective sign of the spiritual sacrifice offered to God<sup>90</sup> by M'siha. It is M'siha's salvation itself. It is in the Qurbana celebration we realize this salvation.

The Pauline greetings convey both the message of the Church as the house hold of the triune God and the saving worship. It makes present to the Church the blessings of the triune God. "The grace of God our Lord Jesus Christ and the love of God the Father and the fellowship of Holy Spirit be with us all now and always and for ever and ever."<sup>91</sup> It is significant to note here Narsai's exposition about this greeting:

The priest first of all blesses the people with that canon in which he makes his voice audible to the faithful: 'The grace,' he says, 'of Jesus our Lord and the love of the Father and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with us:' that grace which our Lord has given us by His coming, may it give us confidence before His Majesty: 'the love of the Father,' who sent us the Son, who is from Him, may it open to us the door of mercy in day of His coming: 'the communion of the Holy Spirit,' of which we have been made worthy, may it sanctify us and purge from the filth of our offences.<sup>92</sup>

It actually prepares us to experience the Church as God's dwelling in her celebration of the Qurbana. Another context in which we come to the experience of Church as the home place of God is the silent prayer of

<sup>88</sup> O.Casel, "Mystery and Liturgy," D.W.Vogel (ed), *Primary Sources of Liturgical Theolgy*, A Reader, Collegeville 2000, 29.

<sup>89</sup> E.Schillebeeckx, *Christ the Sacrament of the Encounter with God*, New York 1963, 45.

<sup>90</sup> Ignatius of Antioch, *Letter to the Smyrnaens* 8:1.

<sup>91</sup> TQ, 44.

<sup>92</sup> Narsai, 'An exposition of the....,' 11.

the celebrant during the *karozusa* after the Peace. The celebrant says this prayer in a low voice, "Lord, Almighty in your mercy, help my weakness and by your grace make me worthy to offer before you this living and holy sacrifice for the benefit of the whole congregation and for the praise of your adorable Trinity, Father, Son and Holy Spirit for ever."<sup>93</sup> Thus the Church in its entirety is itself a sign already containing the redemptive reality of M'siha. The Church's own internal invisible communion in grace with God in M'siha becomes visible in its saving activity. The participant's faithful and active participation in the Qurbana celebration is essential to experience the essence of the Church's saving worship and to encounter the triune God.

### 1.1.2.3 The Church: Acme of communion with God

The Church in its whole is a triune communion. The Church in her proper activity is the manifestation of the triune communion of God's love for men in M'siha and in the Holy Spirit. The Church being the bride of M'siha, is itself full of grace. It is an offer of grace to those who approach it because her resource is the holy Qurbana. We must not lose sight of the fact that the Church is a mystery of these three persons of Father, Son and the Holy Spirit. She is a sign bearing

within itself the reality of inward union with God in M'siha.<sup>94</sup> The hymn Sanctus will give us a wider view about Church as the household of the Trinity. In the Book of Isaiah the "thrice holy hymn" accompanies a theophany, the revelation of God's glory on earth. We chant:

Crying out and praising, without ceasing, and proclaiming to one another and saying: holy, holy, holy Lord God Almighty. Heaven and earth are full of his praises. Hosanna in the highest; Hosanna to the son of David. Blessed is he who came and is to come in the name of the Lord. Hosanna in the highest.<sup>95</sup>

Commenting on the hymn Sanctus Narsai notes:

This is what the crying of 'Holy' three times means: but that of 'Lord' makes known that the nature of the Deity is one. Holy is Father, who has the property of fatherhood, and is the cause and the begetter, and the begotten. Holy is the Son, who has the property of generation, who from the Father is begotten eternally without beginning. Holy is the Spirit, who has the property of possession, who proceedeth from the Father, and is beyond (all) times. With these (words) all the Church cries out and returns to silence.<sup>96</sup>

<sup>93</sup> TQ, 45.

<sup>94</sup> E. Schillebeeckx, *Christ the Sacrament...*, 52; Irenaeus, *Adversus Heresum*, PG, 7, 437-1224.

<sup>95</sup> TQ, 45.

<sup>96</sup> Narsai, 'An exposition of the...', 13.



Theodor's exhortation in this regard is worth mentioning:

Indeed, the blessed Isaiah foresaw, by the working of the Spirit, the benefits that were to be granted to human race, he heard in vision the Seraphim uttering these words. The prophet saw through revelation that a great service was being performed, which was high above human nature. The prophet noticed that the spiritual hosts appeared to look with great awe and reverence, since they were looking downwards and covering their faces completely with their wings. The doctrine of the Trinity was also revealed at that time when one godhead was proclaimed in three persons. This was revealed by their saying "holy" three times, and once only "Lord." In saying "holy" three times, they showed three persons: the person of the Father, the person of the Son, and the person of the Holy Spirit.<sup>97</sup>

John Bar Zo'bi's exhortation is also distinguishable:

The fact of shouting three times, "Holy, Holy, Holy," reveals the three 'Hypostases' which are found in the Essence. The fact of saying "Lord" and "All powerful" reveals the unity of the

nature of the Being in Three "hypostases." At last the fact of saying "the heaven and the earth are full of His Glory" signifies the infinity of the nature of His Essence.<sup>98</sup>

All these earmark the significance of the Snactus in the Qurbana. Most of Christian tradition has taken the 'thrice-holy hymn' of the Sanctus to refer to the Holy Trinity. Certainly this seems particularly appropriate at this moment in the Qurbana celebration pointing to the Father as the source of sanctification, to the Son who by becoming one of us and offering himself up, was sanctified, and to the Holy Spirit who provides the means of our sanctification. We have here a pattern of that triangular relationship which is characteristic of the way in which we experience and encounter the Holy Trinity in the celebration of the Qurbana.

The third *kusāpā* is another explicit explanation of the Church as the triune communion and an honourable encounter with God. Here the celebrant is in place of the prophet Isaiah. It calls our attention to Isaiah's vision.<sup>99</sup>

The celebrant says: woe to me, for I am dismayed because I am a man of unclean lips and dwell in the midst of

<sup>97</sup> Theodore of Mopsuestia, *Catechetical Homilies* V, J.Quasten, "Theodore of Mopsuestia," *Patrology* Vol 3, Westminster 1963, 100-01.

<sup>98</sup> John BarZo'bi, *Explanation of the...*, 48. Cfr also: A.H.Couratin, "The Sanctus and the Pattern of the Early Anaphora: A Note on the Roman Sanctus," *JEH* Vol 2, 1951, 19-23; G.A.Michel, "Firmilian and Eucharistic Consecration," *JTS* Vol 5, ns, 1954, 215-20; B.D.Spinks, "A note on the Anaphora outlined in Narsai's Homily XXXII," *JTS* Vol 31ns, 1980, 82-93.

<sup>99</sup> Is 6: 5.

a people of unclean lips, and my eyes have seen the King, the Lord of Hosts. How dreadful is this place, for this day I have seen the Lord face to face and this is none other than the house of God.<sup>100</sup>

In this way the Church is a saving and sanctifying community of the triune God. In other words the very existence of the Church is disclosed in the holy Trinity, but in faith encounter with God centered upon M'siha.<sup>101</sup> Thus the Church is the *pleroma* of the holy Trinity.

#### 1.1.2.4 The Church: eternal Trinitarian Presence

We have seen that the Church is the fullness of the holy Trinity. It is the holy Trinity who creates, and both that creative act and its products are the prolongation or extension of the eternal self-communication of the

triune God.<sup>102</sup> Every divine action vis-à-vis in the whole Church is thus Trinitarian in kind. In the entire divine acts the Three act as one yet it remains true there are Three who so act. Their distinction as Source, Word and Bond does not collapse into an act of a unitarian God.<sup>103</sup> The Holy Things to the Holy leads us to the affirmation that the Church is certainly the household of the triune God. We, therefore, pray: "One alone is holy, the Father, one alone is holy, the Son; one alone is holy, the Spirit. Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit for ever and ever. Amen."<sup>104</sup> Here we come to the right understanding of the Church as the Trinitarian abode.<sup>105</sup> The proclamation of the deacon after the "Holy Things to the Holy," "Glorifying the living God" and the congregation's response: "Glory to Him in His Church, and His mercy and compassion be up on us in all moments and times"<sup>106</sup> in

<sup>100</sup> TQ, 46.

<sup>101</sup> W.J.Hill, *The Three Personed God: The Trinity as a Mystery of Salvation*, Washington 1982, 273. Cfr also: J.Damascene, *Exposition Fidei*, PG, 94, 417-36; G.Hibbert, "Mystery and Metaphysics in the Trinitarian Theology of St.Thomas," *ITQ*, Vol 31, 1964, 187-213. E.Hill,, "Our Knowledge of the Trinity," *SJT* Vol 27, 1974, 1-11; W.J.Hill, "Does God know the Future?" *TS* Vol 36, 1975, 3-18; W.J.Hill, "The Eucharist as Eschatological Presence," *Communio* Vol 4, 1977, 305-20; E.Hill, *Knowing the Unknown God*, New York 1971; L.Hodgson, *The Doctrine of the Trinity*, New York 1944; R.Jenson, "Three Identities of One action," *SJT* Vol 28, 1975, 1-15.

<sup>102</sup> W.J.Hill, *The Three Personed God...*, 283.

<sup>103</sup> W.J.Hill, *The Three Personed God...*, 283. Cfr also: E.Hill,, "Our Knowledge of the...", 1-11.

<sup>104</sup> TQ, 60. Cfr: Narsai, 'An exposition of the...', 27.

<sup>105</sup> St. Augustine, *The City of God*, Book X, Chap 20. Cfr: P.Schaff (ed), *A Select Library of the NPNF of the Christian Church* Vol 2, Michigan 1956, 193.

<sup>106</sup> TQ, 60.



unison, focus on the idea that the Church affords us the eternal Trinitarian presence. Again the *slosa* after the *Thesbothta* on Ferial Days expresses in the most profound way that the Church is indispensably the home of the holy Trinity.

We are bound, O Lord, to offer to your most blessed Trinity glory and honour, praise and worship and perpetual thanksgiving for the gift of these glorious, holy, life-giving and divine mysteries, which you in your mercy have given us for the forgiveness of our sins by your grace and your mercy, Lord of all, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, for ever.<sup>107</sup>

It is necessary, therefore, that praise and adoration are offered to the Divine nature by all the creatures. Indeed, the economy of our Lord granted us to become immortal and incorruptible, and to serve God with the invisible hosts<sup>108</sup> "when we are caught in the clouds to meet our Lord in the air, and so will be with the Lord forever."<sup>109</sup> Thus the steadfast faith can only make us experience the eternal presence of God in the Church. The Church experiences this presence of God in and through the celebration of the

Qurbana. This is because the Qurbana is the life—food of the Church. She lives thus from the Qurbana. Furthermore, man can approach God only through the Son in the Holy Spirit. The fact that man in the Church is the image of God is due to the economy of the holy Trinity. Thus the Church is built by the historical work of the divine economy but leads finally to the vision of God, as he is, to the vision of the triune God in his eternal existence. Thus the Church is whom M'siha loved and for whom she gave himself up in order to make her holy by cleansing her with the washing of water by the Word,<sup>110</sup> whom he unites to himself by an unbreakable covenant, and whom he unceasingly "nourishes and cherishes."<sup>111</sup> Finally he filled her with heavenly gifts for all eternity, in order that we might know the love of God and of M'siha for us, a love which exceeds all knowledge, so that we may be filled with all the riches of God.<sup>112</sup>

## Conclusion

The Church is the body of M'siha and a sacrament of the communion. She is a communion. It is so much one with M'siha

<sup>107</sup> *TQ*, 67. Cfr also: P. Beguerie, « La Bible née de la liturgie, » *La MD* Vol 126, 1976, 109-11; K. Rahner, "What is a Sacrament," *Worship* Vol 47/5, 1973, 274-84.

<sup>108</sup> Theodore, *on Eucharist*..., 101.

<sup>109</sup> 1 Thes 4: 17. See also: Theodore, *on Eucharist*..., 101.

<sup>110</sup> Eph 5: 26. See the work: St. J. Chrysostom, "Epistle of St. Paul the Apostle to the Ephesians: Homily XX," P. Schaff (ed), *NPNF* Vol 13, Michigan 1956, 143-52; *LG*, 6§ 5.

<sup>111</sup> Eph 5: 29.

<sup>112</sup> Eph 3: 11; *LG*, 6§ 5; see S. P. Brock, "Word and Sacrament in the Writings of the Syriac Fathers," J. Vellian (ed), *SCS* Vol 13, Poona 1988, 1-12.

that its entire being shares in her Lord's death and resurrection. Thus the celebration of the Qurbana is not only the moment but also the place in which it gives experience of the Church in the totality of its mystery. From the above elucidations the Church exists as the harbour of peace on earth because she has the great sacrifice of the Qurbana. She draws her life from it. It is a truth doesn't simply expresses through a daily experience of faith, but recapitulates the heart of the mystery of the Church.<sup>113</sup> The Church joyfully experiences this in a variety of ways:

- a) the constant fulfilment of the promise: "Lo I am with you always, to the close of the age."<sup>114</sup>
- b) In the Qurbana when she receives his body and blood she rejoices in his presence with unique intensity.
- c) She holds "the source and summit of Christian life"<sup>115</sup>
- d) She finds her total spiritual wealth in it: Christ himself, our Passover and living bread. Through his very flesh, made vital and vitalizing by the Holy Spirit, he offers life to men.<sup>116</sup>

So the gaze of the Church is incessantly turned to her Lord, present in the Sacrament of the Altar in which she discovers the full manifestation of his assured love. Thus the Qurbana stands at the centre of the Church's life: She was born of the paschal mystery and gifted with the heavenly riches. She is the permanent locus of the royal banquet of M'siha's Body and Blood. Thus the celebration of the Qurbana shows the Church to the world, in which all men may be saved. It is thus an imperative inherent in the being of the Church ever to keep the unity of the Holy Spirit in the bond of peace and thereby to mirror in itself the oneness of the holy and the blessed Trinity. Thus from the celebration of the Qurbana, as from a source, grace is channelled into us and the sanctification of men Christ and the glorification of God to which all other activities of the Church are focussed as toward their goal, are most impressively realized. Thus the Church experiences her Lord deeply in the celebration of the Qurbana. Therefore in the whole conduct of the Church's celebration of the Qurbana she has her divine founder present with her. That's why we uphold the Church as the home of the holy Trinity, pledge of our salvation, and thus be present as the harbour of peace on earth!!!

<sup>113</sup> EE, 1§ 1.

<sup>114</sup> Mt 28: 20.

<sup>115</sup> LG, 11.

<sup>116</sup> PO, 5§ 2.



## NEWS

### NEW CARDINALS

Pope Francis nominated 20 *new Cardinals*, raising the number of men from developing countries in the collage of Cardinals that can elect his successor. Among the nominated Cardinals, 15 are under the age of 80, who are eligible to vote in a future Conclave for a new Pope. He named also another five who are over 80 as Cardinals Emeriti, an honorary title and they are not eligible to vote in a conclave. By incorporating cardinals from different regions of the world, the Pope wishes to express the universal nature of the Catholic Church.

### VISIT OF SYRIAN ORTHODOX PATRIARCH

His Holiness Patriarch Moran Mor Ignatius Aphrem II, the supreme head of the *Syrian Orthodox Church*, arrived in Kerala on February 7 for an Apostolic Visit to India. He visited various religious places and participated in different ecumenical and inter-religious meetings.

### ST JOSEPH VAZ AS THE APOSTLE OF SRI LANKA

Pope Francis canonized Blessed Joseph Vaz, who is known as the Apostle of Sri Lanka, at a public Mass on the Colombo seafront on Wednesday, January 14. During the visit, Pope was greeted by the newly-elected Sri Lankan President Maithripala Sirisena, Cardinal Malcolm Ranjith of Colombo, and by several other officials also.

### NEW RECTORS FOR THE MAJOR SEMINARIES

New rectors were appointed in the Major Seminaries of Kerala, which are under the direct supervision of the Synod of the Syro Malabar Church. Rev. Fr. Joy Ayiniadan and Rev. Fr. Mathew Illathuparambil are appointed as Rectors of St. Thomas Apostolic Seminary, Vadavathoor and St. Joseph's Pontifical Seminary, Mangalapuzaha respectively. Rev. Fr. Emmanuel Attel will continue his office as the Rector in Good Shepherd Major Seminary, Kunnoth.

Registered with the Registrar of News Papers for India under No. 45492/79/H2 (51276/86/H 10) ₹20

**AN INTERNATIONALLY ACCLAIMED QUARTERLY JOURNAL OF  
ORIENTAL THEOLOGY PUBLISHED SUCCESSFULLY FOR THE LAST  
THIRTY SIX YEARS OPENS BEFORE YOU THE COLOURFUL SPECTACLE OF  
PRECIOUS GEMS IN THE THEOLOGICAL ARENAS OF  
EASTERN LITURGY, SPIRITUALITY, ECCLESIOLOGY  
AND ECUMENISM WITH A SPECIAL ACCENT ON  
THE SYRIAC ORIENT AND THE ST. THOMAS  
CHRISTIAN TRADITION.**

### **EDITORIAL CONSULTANTS**

#### **EDITORIAL CONSULTANTS**

Abp Joseph Perumthottam, Abp George Valiamattam, Abp Joseph Powathil,  
Bp George Punnakottil, Bp Joseph Kallarangatt, Bp Sebastian Vadakkal,  
Bp Joseph Pallikaparampil, Bp A.D. Mattom, Bp Paul Chittilappilly,  
Dr. Mathew Vellanickal, Dr. Xavier Koodapuzha, Dr. Paul Pallath

### **THIS QUARTERLY HIGHLIGHTS**

#### **THIS QUARTERLY HIGHLIGHTS**

- ❖ Scientific studies on ecumenical ventures
- ❖ Different dimensions of the oriental ethos
- ❖ Current developments in the liturgical theology
- ❖ Perspectives of eastern ecclesiological traditions
- ❖ Investigations into the various aspects of the Canon Law
- ❖ Insights into the inspiring lives of the Fathers, the Saints and the Martyrs of the East

### **ALL CORRESPONDENCE TO**

#### **All Correspondence to**

The Executive Editor  
Christian Orient, P.B. No. 1  
Vadavathoor, Kottayam 686 010,  
Kerala, India  
Ph. 0481-2578319, 2571807  
E-mail: christianorientjnl@gmail.com